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SUBJECT U.S.-Israel/The Future of Lebanon

JACK ANDERSON: There's a fascinating story behind why the Washington visit of Lebanon's new President, Amin Gemayel. The story is told in documents that are locked in the secret files of the Central Intelligence Agency. Now, these documents describe the behind-the-scenes skirmishing between Israel and the United States over the future of Lebanon. The CIA correctly anticipated the Israeli invasion of Lebanon more than a year before it happened.

Now, let me read a passage dated March 6, 1981. It's stamped secret. "Israeli incursions into Lebanon, if not imminent, are nevertheless inevitable." I'm still quoting. "The question is not so much whether or when such incursions will occur, but the scope and purpose of such incursions and their potential for igniting a wide and more dangerous confrontation."

The CIA not only expected the Israelis to move into Lebanon, but warned that Israel would use its Christian connections to dominate the future Lebanese government. The CIA, therefore, sought to counteract Israel's influence by secretly supporting the same Christian militias.

Let me read an excerpt from a top secret CIA memo. "It is concluded that the agency should provide military and financial assistance, as requested, to the Phalangist militias. Should the militias remain solely dependent upon Israeli support, the U.S. will forfeit all influence in a post-incursion environment."

So the CIA secretly funded the Christian Phalangists. This gave the United States the ear of its leader, Bashir Gemayel. Washington persuaded him to resist Israeli pressure and

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to refuse to sign a treaty with Israel.

Bashir's assassination brought his brother Amin Gemayel to power. The United States immediately courted him. In response, he flew to Washington and called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Lebanon, including Israeli forces. This means that the Reagan Administration has successfully outmaneuvered Israel.

As one Israeli leader grumbled privately, "Lebanon will now become a U.S. protectorate."